EduChain: CIA-Compliant Block-chain for Intelligent Cyber Defense of Microservices in Education Industry 4.0

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Abstract

Massive data handling requirement in education industry 4.0 has attracted interests in the research of microservice architectures due to their scalability, resilience and elasticity characteristics. This development has been challenged by extensive data exchange required by a set of independent microservices to build a complete application, which could result in increasing risks and exposure to the security and privacy breaches of the data. It is imperative to see that educational data are highly sensitive, critical for ascertaining educational attainment and facilitating credentials for qualification verifications. This paper puts forward a new proposal of devising a security and privacy-preserving design mechanism of data transactions in educational microservices leveraging the blockchain technology. The design comprises three phases, namely the blockchain framework, data sending-receiving and confidentiality-integrity-availability over a secured platform with each phase having detailed mechanisms for algorithm implementation. The proposal is shown to exhibit favourable performance in terms of time cost of publishing, throughput and latency, and shown to have high survey acceptance in terms of confidentiality, integrity and availability with approximately 10% improvement from prior blockchain adoption.

Index Terms

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Manuscript received February 23, 2021; Accepted May 18, 2021.

Blockchain, data handling, education, industry 4.0, microservices, security.

I. Introduction

The recent emergence of Industry 4.0 has motivated the development of a robust data platform that revolutionizes information processing across educational institutions worldwide. This is relevant to serve the growing scale and complexity of the end-educational-stakeholder applications that are built on top of the massive data being exchanged. A key requirement herein is to have an accessible and scalable data platform whilst maintaining the authenticity and integrity of data transactions in order to promote universal trust on the educational environments.

To address this, there is an interesting direction on the usage of microservice architecture and design to develop a variety of scalable and resilient system applications for the education industry. Departing away from a sole single cloud solution for academic data accessibility, microservices can be considered to achieve distributed and integrated network infrastructure over the existing operations of a monolithic structure [1]. Herein scalability is of paramount importance whereby network end-users can exploit resource-constrained devices, and the number of computing devices can be flexibly tailored and expanded, independent from the end-user applications and services provided. However, dealing with such a distributed system paradigm comes with a multitude of challenges, driven by the spread characteristics of the processing units and the need of frequent data exchanges across the platform. These make a significant proportion of the current microservice solutions difficult to guarantee data confidentiality, integrity and availability (CIA) [2] in the existing infrastructure to minimize feasible distrust in network activities and the responsibility of fault-finding infrastructure to protect network end-users. It also remains a question how guaranteeing CIA to highly-sensitive educational data could impact the overall system performance from the quality of services experienced by the end-users.

Growing interests in block-chain technology could pave a way for addressing the challenge of instrumenting CIA features to the microservices in educational platforms. It has been shown in recent research that block-chain policy can be used to identify the fake information circulating in the networks. Seeing how Industry 4.0 could provide state-of-the-art technologies [3] for intelligent real-time data access in the educational industry, a block-chain based educational information system [4] can address collaboration of students, instructors and administrations as well as provide academic data certifications. A highly reliable block-chain based intelligent resource management [5] is required in the educational sector to enrich the learning productivity

and assure the learning sustainability for academic data certifications. Block-chain enables greater data protection and collaborates secure data sharing to build cyber defenses in an intelligent way equipped with embedded algorithmic processing.

Looking at the CIA issues surrounding the educational microservices and the block-chain potential in providing data confidentiality and security, this paper puts forward a proposal of designing a CIA-compliant block-chain technique as part of the wider cyber-defense framework for securing educational micro-services. Focusing on applications that define the framework components, we investigate ways of block-chain integration with the microservices, namely data validation, assessment, accreditation and verification, which particularly handle sensitive cloud data using a set of independent operations running through a lightweight block-chain system. The system is envisaged to provide confidentiality and integrity for different types of academic information, such as registration data, certificates, transcript, etc. as part of the CIA triad services, and aims to maximize its availability through provision of lightweight computational blocks. This is captured in the framework shown in Fig. 1.

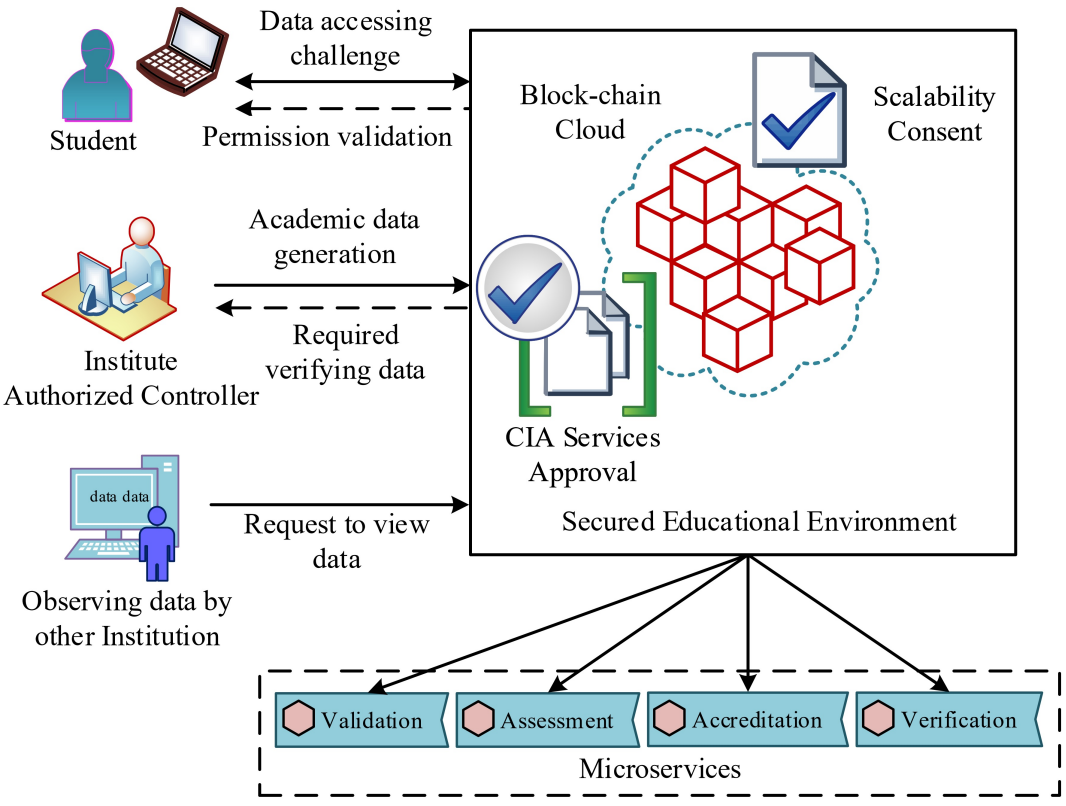


Fig. 1: Basic structure of secured educational framework.

We refer to this proposed framework as *Educhain*, which executes the entire process of obtaining confidentiality and security of academic information. Educational data can be accessed and stored by registered students or authorized user in this platform. Strangers who are not registered in the desired educational institutions cannot access academic information herein; but, they can request to view a specific information. Block-chains are incorporated to build the user trust whilst the micro-services can enhance data accessibility and achieve scalability. Combining the two is anticipated to ensure data security due to the follow-up of data block transactions and eliminate risky activities through secured handling of academic data. In a nutshell, this work contributes to the following.

- We propose a secure framework that serves a set of educational microservices for secured data handling exploiting block-chain technology.
- We incorporate CIA features to the system design that integrates block-chain and educational microservices.
- We examine the scalability of the proposed framework via numerical testing and quantitative investigation.
- A comparative analysis is conducted to validate the proposed proposal by measuring the performance of our system in contrast to a variety of methods with block-chain structure.

The overview of the paper is shown as follows. In Section II, we describe some closely related works. The overall methodology is discussed in Section III. Section IV explains the results and discussion of proposed system. Section V concludes the work by underlining key findings.

II. Related Work

In this section, it has been reviewed some concepts or strategies related to block-chain, microservices in different sectors, CIA, advanced driven designs for Industry 4.0 and intelligent cyber defense to present our proposed model. The CIA-based block-chain is a prominent issue for intelligent cyber defense on any platform.

A. Microservices in Various Sectors and CIA Security strategy

Coulson et al. [6] developed a prototype based on micro-service for web application by auto-scaling process and evaluated it for prediction using supervised machine learning. Wang et al. [7] mentioned an elastic scheduling model that can solve task scheduling of different micro-services in cloud-based computing resources. Mena et al. [8] described the micro-services concept for

the application of software architecture on IoT devices to acquire data and to maintain the module configuration. Chen et al. [9] developed virtual war room model to handle the behavior of micro-service applications including data tracing, fault analysis. In software industry, Akbulut and Perros [10] executed the performance analysis of hardware behavior, time of query response and rate of packet loss for micro-services sketch patterns to reduce infrastructural-risks. Chen et al. [11] constructed a micro-service based framework on the properties of heterogeneous and dynamic edge-clouds that could solve the optimization problem of micro-service-based deployment using deep-integration learning process.

Pinheiro et al. [12] proposed a solution of block-chain cloud networks and smart contracts to monitor the integrity files where the system protocol provided CIA, decentralization and automation analysis for the generated results through symmetric encryption. Kumar et al. [13] suggested a CIA security solution to protect the VANETs architecture to avoid intrusion by applying end-to-end certification and authentication in where data is transferred in the encrypted form to verify communication entities. Cha et al. [14] recommended a framework based on CIA using block-chain strategies and key escrow encryption systems to address security issues in data supply chain management on large-scale storage data in the untrusted environment. Tohidi et al. [15] proposed an authenticate lightweight design to make a secure conjunction between the neighborhood network gateway and smart grid control centre for data transfer to compress the data using lossless compression and Merkel hash tree algorithm to achieve CIA which diminishes the data transmission, computational and cloud expenses. Halabi et al. [16] presented a broker-based structure to handle the cloud security-SLAs through CIA features protection against vulnerabilities and threats in cloud.

B. Advanced Driven Designs for Industry 4.0

To enhance the quality of emerging IoT technology and to optimize cloud computing, including cyber security, Industry 4.0 is an ongoing industrial revolution. Kalør et al. [17] investigated the complexities of network slicing and the protocols of industrial communication for utilization, incoherence and authenticity to manage various requirements in Industry 4.0. Jiang et al. [18] performed network behavior analysis and feature extraction using big data for Industry 4.0 usage. In particular, He et al. [19] proposed a replacement algorithm based on locality-aware to make a most effective cloud computing for efficient manufactory of industry 4.0. Li et al. [20] developed block-chain based FeneChain that could investigate and operate the energy trading activities to

build an industrious environment for Industry 4.0. Moreover, Li [21] studied the 'education supply chain' and configured the educational system in the context of interactions of global institutions for Industry 4.0.

C. Block-chain based Intelligent Cyber Defense

Shen et al. [22] presented block-chain based vehicular social network model including certificate authority for a position-based confidentiality-preserving protocol service. Milne et al. [23] developed a trusted cyber-physical scheme using distributed ledger and block-chain mechanism to achieve integrity, device detection and authentication. In edge-AI permitted IoT, Lin et al. [24] mentioned block-chain based knowledge market framework through distributed P2P mode using consensus and cryptographic mechanism to produce knowledge tradable for effective and secure knowledge exploration. Besides, Yazdinejad et al. [25] presented cluster architecture where SDN controllers with block-chain are applied on IoT network to provide advanced routing protocols and to remove POWs for increased protection. Choi et al. [26] developed an innovative model with block-chain and fabricated RPS prototype in order to monitor the data-integrity as PoM and identified cyber-attacks in real-time of PLCs due to PoW network associated with lot of nodes.

Unlike the earlier published studies cited in this paper, herein a CIA authorized block-chain design has been proposed that generates a new secure data handling scheme with validated micro-services in any educational institution to meet the aim of implementing multipurpose high-performance model.

III. Overview of Educhain Model

This section introduces the block-chain based CIA authorized cloud architecture and builds a new secure data handling model in any educational institution to meet the aim of implementing multipurpose high-performance structure using the micro-services design, named Educhain model which is shown in Fig. 2. Driven by data transaction needs, a stateless micro-service does not hold session state within requests, but a stateful micro-service contains session data for multi-use case. The CIA of academic information in this model can build data satisfactions and validations among the stakeholder of the educational institution. This framework can build more user trust on CIA of academic data in network activities as a professional service against forged institutions

websites. As the necessity of the block-chain based secure educational data usage is increasing rapidly, scalable solution is also a key factor as well. The main design views for this platform based on several phases are presented as follows:

A. Phase-1: Overview of the Educhain model

The proposed approach is basically designed by four modules such as user role, registration control, access control and secured data storage whose operations are discussed below:

1) User's Role and Functionality: The user's role and functionality of the Educhain model is controlled by EI, OEI and Student. Education Institution (EI) is the key data provider and generator of all academic information within the cloud of block-chain based educational system network on behalf of its own students. EI cannot generate own public keys but it can generate or update educational information of their students in the block-chain using the student's Public key (Pk) and create a set of session keys for each unique transaction as main functionality without sharing that information with outsiders.

Other Education Institution (OEI) is the key data recipient of secured academic information in the block-chain. As the main functionality, it is not only able to create user's public key, add or update the user academic data but also keeps total viewership of the academic data with the permission of the registered student to read and verify the educational records from the block-chain network. A Student is the initial and key participant of own academic information in the block-chain based educational system, who has the right to create a unique identity and view its respective data. The main functionality of the students is to create their own Public Key (Pk) and digital identity to be paired with their education record as owner. A student has no right to key in other educational data without its own data but grant other parties total viewership of its data.

2) Registration Control: In this case, the registration control module primarily allows the students to create their own unique digital identity with their own public key. When a student wants to register to an educational institution by this framework, it generates unique block-chain student identity with password and issues digital ID and password PWD to student securely. Also it stores this information in the educhain data storage. The public key generation is based on the RSA (Rivest–Shamir–Adleman) public key cryptosystem for the enforcement of integrity. All instances of academic record creation in the block-chain must be done with the creation of a valid RSA public key beforehand.

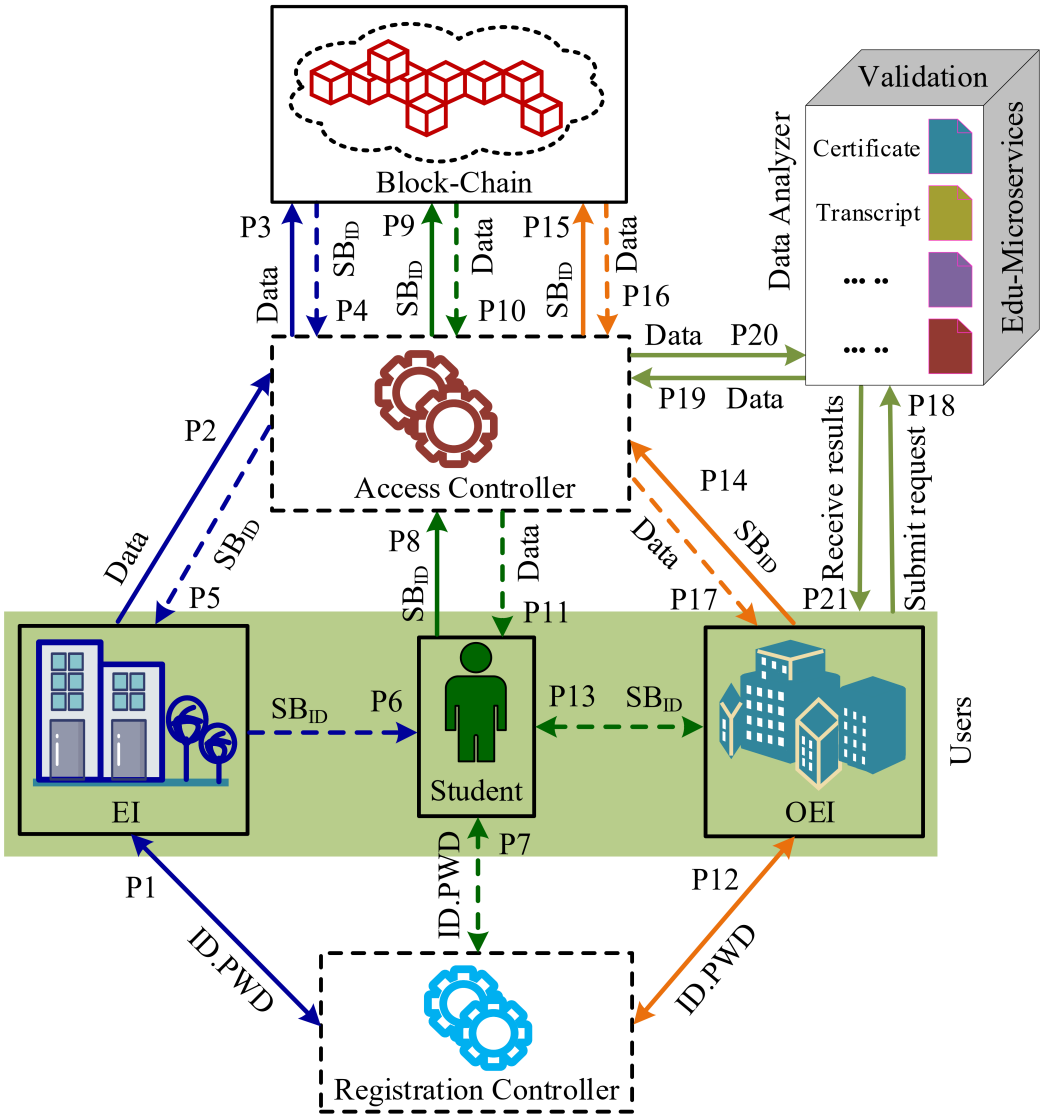


Fig. 2: Educhain model.

3) Access Control: The access control module permits all parties to interact with the block-chain based secure educational system and access the information from block-chain based database. The participants of the block-chain must have an intermediary module like access control to interact with the block-chain to ensure the usability, availability and security of the system. All methods of interaction such as adding records, viewing records or sharing records must be securely executed through the access control module of this platform.

4) Secured Data Storage: The secure data storage module of the block-chain based educational system is specifically designed for all parties to securely store their data under the

full confidentiality and integrity. Moreover, it is based on a block-chain method of check-and-balance where all transactions are cross referenced by the SHA256 hash generated. All addition of records will generate a bi SHA256 of the new and previous record. Any tampering of data can be checked and verified by the sequencing of each SHA256 hash. A break in the sequence indicates data tampering and justifies that the chain after the break or fork should be declared null and void.

B. Phase-2: Data Sending and Receiving Mechanism with Data Analysis

Data analyzer is designed to analyze the lightweight edu-services with validation support in Educhain system. Applying validation techniques, it enables automated data analysis to analyze edu-services such as certificates, transcripts, etc. in the block-chain based education model. The operations of the proposed method happen sequentially through the process of sending and receiving in the Educhain model. There are three types of users in this system such as EI, Student and OEI wherein Only EI is allowed to send data to Educhain. As illustrated in the diagram of Fig. 2, the mechanism for sending and receiving data in this platform is briefly presented below:

Process 1, 7, 12: All users must provide valid user id (ID) and password (PWD) to use the system. Otherwise, they need to register with the Registration Controller (RC). Once authenticated, they can instruct the Access Controller (AC) to access to the Educhain. Only AC can access Educhain directly.

Process 2: Once authenticated, EI can send data of specific student to the AC. All data will be encrypted at this phase.

Process 3: The encrypted data will be sent to Educhain for storing purposes.

Process 4: The Educhain will store the data in the block. A unique id, SBID will be created for the student block. The student block id, SBID will return to the AC.

Process 5: EI will store the SBID received from AC and store it in their database for their reference.

Process 6: A student will get their SBID by the EI as requested. They can use it to access their block in the Educhain.

Process 8: Once authenticated, a student can send an instruction to the AC to fetch their data in the Educhain by providing their SBID.

Process 9: AC will interact with the Educhain to fulfil the student request.

Process 10: Educhain will look for student's data in the block-chain with the SBID as a reference and return it to AC.

Process 11: AC will pass encrypted data to the student as earlier request. Students can view their data after decryption.

Process 13: One of the advantages of this model is the student can permit other people or institution to view their data at a certain period as long as they have their SBID.

Process 14: Once authenticated, OEI will send a request to view data by sending the SBID to the AC.

Process 15: AC will interact directly with the Educhain to fulfil the OEI request.

Process 16: Once found, data will send to AC in encrypted form.

Process 17: The AC will pass the data to OEI, and after the data decrypted, OEI can view the data.

Process 18: All users submit their requests to data analyzer for data validation.

Process 19: Data analyzer will interact with AC for the lightweight services validation to fulfill the user's requests.

Process 20: AC will permit data analyzer to ensure the analyzing data validation.

Process 21: Data analyzer will send the feedback to the users over their requests about edu-services.

C. Phase-3: CIA on Secure Educational Platform

Academic data security is ensured by exploiting CIA services through access controller to get high performance of data accessibility for which the following aspects are discussed.

1) Confidentiality: Generally confidentiality assessments protect the sensitive data from unrecognized access and misconduct. So, academic data can be accessed by registered and permitted users in education system. Different levels of access ensure that only valid users can have legal permission to ensure the ability distribution and prevent the conflict of interest. A detailed of the enforcement of confidentiality can be found in the encryption and decryption Algorithm 1 & 2 where the using notations are Public Key(P_k), Session Key(S_k), Raw educational data(D), cipher(cip), utf-8 encoding(u), Base 64 encoding(64), Common 128-bit Advanced Encryption Standard(AES), encrypt-then-authenticate-then-translate(EAX), Education Institution(EI), Student(STD), Other Educational Institution(OEI).

Encryption algorithm utilizes a dual hybrid cryptosystem where the raw educational data is paired and encrypted together with the RSA public key to form the cipherdata and the session key. This dual hybrid system ensures that trust and anonymity is embedded into a trustless ecosystem. The right to confidentiality is enforced with a failsafe system where all tri-data is required to decrypt the educational data. The tri-data encompasses the RSA public key, the session key and the identifying data where in most cases can be set by the unique student ID. The absence of any one of these data would trigger a fail-safe as described in the decryption algorithm. In order to break the confidence cycle, the malicious entity is required to possess all tri-data or decipher all 2 layers of RSA and AES algorithm and reverse the SHA256 hash to get to the raw data. In any case where one of the sensitive data is leaked to the public via a malicious entity either from EI or OEI, the student still maintains the ultimate right of confidentiality without exposing any other sensitive information.

Algorithm 1 Academic data encryption and sending to Educhain system

Initialization of variables

P_k, $D = raw$(CGPA, ID, Cert)

$D = raw$(CGPA, ID, Cert)

$D(u) = D$ is encoded in $utf - 8$

$S_k = Enc(rand + P_k)$

$S_kcip = encrypt\ AES(P_k + S_k)$

$Dcip(u) = encrypt\ EAX(S_k + D)$

$Dcip(u) = enc$(CGPA, ID, Cert)

$Dcip(64) = Dcip$ is encoded to base64

Encrypted $Dcip(64)$ is sent to the Blockchain by EI

$S_kcipher$ sent to STD

2) Integrity: Academic data on the block-chain platform and network cannot be deleted or altered once it has been added to the block-chain. Integrity measures defend data from unrecognized transaction. Due to its immutability factored in by the block to block hashing method, all information keyed into the block-chain shall have their integrity instilled in place. A detailed description of the enforcement of integrity can be found in the block creation process of Fig. 3.

Algorithm 2 Academic Data Decryption and retrieving from Educhain system

Initialization of variables
P_k, $S_kcipher$, $Dcip(64)$ = enc(CGPA, ID, Cert)
Encrypted $Dcip(64)$ is retrieved from the block-chain
$S_kcipher$ retrieved from STD
$Dcip(u) = Dcip(64)$ is decoded back to $utf - 8$
$S_k = Decrypt\ S_kcip\ AES(P_k + S_kcip)$
if $S_k \neq (P_k + S_kcip)$ **then**
else
    Decryption failed, invalid pairing of P_k and S_kcip, Process is terminated
end if
$D(u) = Decrypt\ EAX(Dcip(u) + S_k)$
if $D(u) \neq (Dcip(u) + S_k)$ **then**
else
    Decryption failed, invalid S_k and P_k is used, Process is terminated
end if
$D = D(u)$ is decoded back to raw data
$D = raw$(CGPA, ID, Cert)
D can be retrieved by OEI

$$NBK_i = Hashing(BI_i, PBK_i) \tag{1}$$

Where, NBK_i is $i-th$ number of previous blocks, PBK_i is $i-th$ number of first blocks and BI_i is storing $i-th$ block number and data in the blockchain.

$$PBK_i = \begin{cases} NULL & \text{if } BI_1 \text{ is the first block} \\ NBK_{i-1} & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \tag{2}$$

PBK_1 is the first block known as the Genesis block which should be $NULL$ in value at all times according to the block-chain engineer. The consecutive block, $Block\ PBK_2$ shall be determined by the hash of BI_2 which is populated by the academic data and NBK_1 which is the hash output of the former block, PBK_1. Therefore each block is chained backwards by the

former Block's hash output, NBK_{N-1} and chained forwards by the Block's new hash output NBK_N.

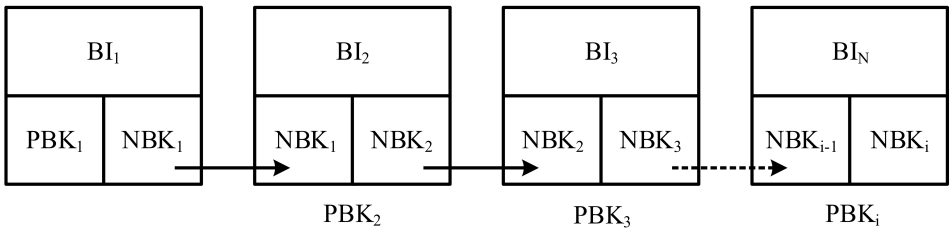


Fig. 3: Building blocks of Educhain

This hash chaining from a transaction to the next block is implemented with the SHA256 one-way hashing method which enforces the integrity of the whole block-chain. Whenever there is a discrepancy between the hash codes, it is produced an evidence of data tampering either by substitution or modification. For such incident, the chain of integrity is broken and the transaction should be nullified. This process guarantees that each submission of records has the integrity of both system and user that stored data of the block-chain is logically true.

TABLE I: User roles in Educhain

Access Level	Student	EI	OEI
Owner	✓	x	x
Create	x	✓	x
Update	x	✓	x
Allow sharing	✓	x	x
Read	✓	✓	✓

3) Availability: The deals of availability preserve data timely and do not allow interrupted access in the process. The block-chain is accessible only through AC module to ensure a streamlined query process and users have an equal right to access block-chain resources for getting entire facility from online. TABLE I shows three categories of users with different access levels those who can communicate with Educhain through AC while sending and receiving data. As a result, an independent streamlined access of the block-chain network is provided equally to all users across the board encompassing OEI, EI and Students. The only prerequisite is that access to data availability is granted only to individual participants, as long as they have the

correct credentials. Students can view and share their data if they have their public key, session key and unique ID. EI can add data into the block-chain using authorized public key of the student. OEI can view data using session key and unique ID by the student permission.

D. Phase-4: Scalability on Academic data

The Educhain model can solve the concerns of data scalability by the multi-node technique, multi-transnational block and lightweight web structure to handle large user data transactions or current user workloads. In Algorithm 3, the using notations are time(T), time limit($Tlim$), Block index/block length($BlockIdx$), timestamp($Tstamp$), chain length($content$), Block(B), Transaction(Tx).

Block pooling as described in the algorithm above, involves the processing of several transactions at once in a concurrent block as opposed to the conventional method of hashing and chaining each transaction in a singular block. In the algorithm, a new Block B_n, is created at which time a transaction Tx_{n+1} is executed. Once this process occurs all submitted transactions to the node within time $Tlim$, would be accepted and processed as a single block. All contents and data in the block B_n would be hashed by $SHA256$. Once the Block is verified and secured, it would be added to the local Block-chain $BlockIdx$. The hashes of each block B_n, would be further checked. If there are no errors, $BlockIdx$ would be sent and published to all connected nodes. When all other nodes accept $BlockIdx$, the confirmation status would be sent back to the local machine. It increases the efficacy of the Block-chain to process more transactions with a shorter time and computing resources.

IV. Results and Discussion

There are two aspects: performance analysis and feasibility analysis of our edu-system have been mentioned in this section. So, quantitative exploration has been conducted to know the user's perception of academic data handling before and after the implementation of block-chain technology.

A. Performance Analysis

Educhain is designed to conduct against the other two algorithms such as Eduleger and DVF for measuring the performance of our block-chain based system using a local block-chain server, a remote block-chain server and a client server. To measure the performances of this system,

Algorithm 3 The data-block transaction of Educhain system

if $(BlockIdx == 0)$ **then**
    Create Genesis Block, B_0
    Initialize default value in Genesis Block
end if
if (pending $Tx \neq 0$) **then**
    Create New Block, B_n
    Block Pooling:
    for $(T = 0, T < Tlim, T++)$ **do**
        Create New Transaction, Tx_{n+1}
        Add data to Tx (author, content, chipherdata)
        Add timestamp to transaction
    end for
end if
Generate $SHA256$ hash of B_n
if ($SHA256$ hash of $B_n \neq$B$_{n-1}$) **then**
    return error
else
    Add B_n to $BlockIdx$
end if
check integrity of $BlockIdx$
if (error $==$ None) **then**
    share $BlockIdx$ to connected nodes
else
    raise error
end if
get latest block information from connected nodes

data sizes in kilobytes (KB) from 10KB, 20KB, 30KB, 40KB to 50KB are used depending on the key metrics such as the average time in miliseconds (ms), the throughput in kilobits per second (kbps) and the latency in miliseconds (ms) as well as a number of clients (from 1 to 5) are used depending on the throughput in kbps which are shown in Fig. 4 (a), (b), (c) & (d).

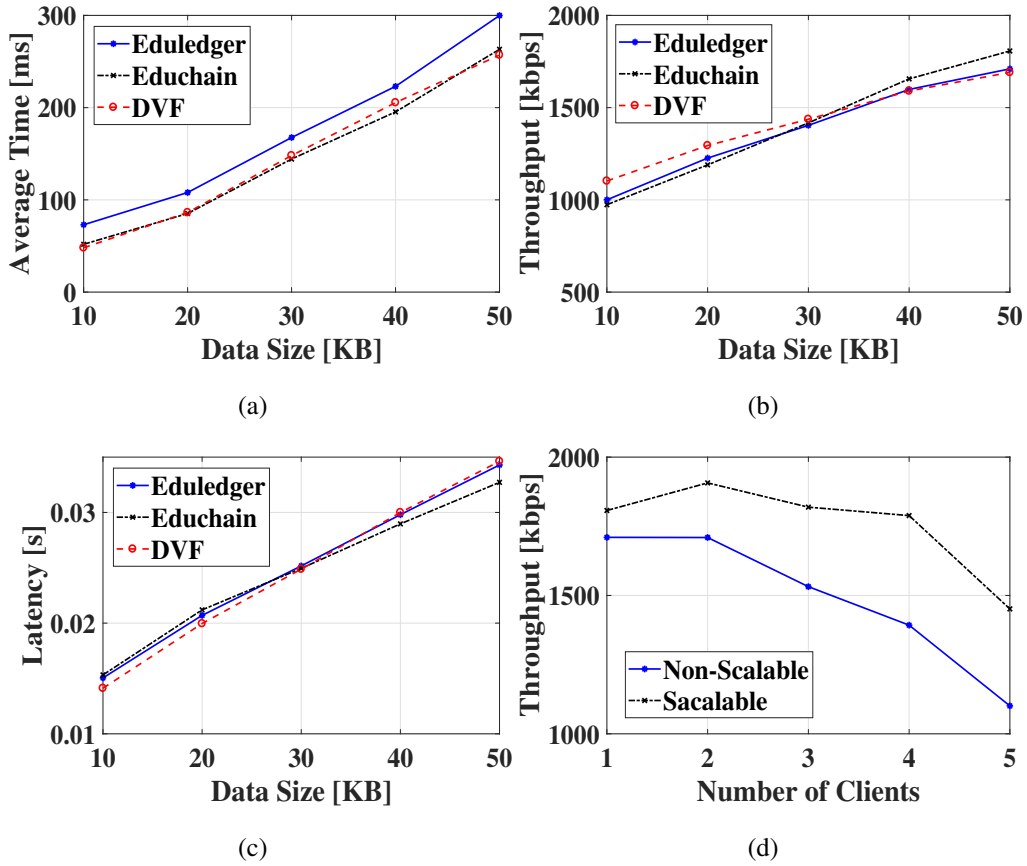


Fig. 4: Analysis on (a) Time Cost of Publishing Transactions, (b) Throughput per Algorithm, (c) Latency per algorithm and (d) Throughput per Client.

The first performance test is the time cost on a publishing transaction, which is the duration of each algorithm to post a single data block in its respective block-chain database. This measures the variances and the broad average under different load capacity. According to the results, the experiment is started from 10KB and 73.01ms for Eduledger, 51.82ms for Educhain and 48.05ms for DVF. At the minimum load point, it provides the shortest average time for DVF. As the data load increases, the average time of Eduledger and DVF rose sharply between from 95.75ms to 214.2ms (+118.45ms) for the former algorithm and 75.75ms to 224.2ms (+148.45ms) for the latter algorithm 20KB and 40KB where DVF overtook Eduledger at the 40KB. The average time

at 30KB data load of Educhain has changed significantly from 120.56ms to 202.4ms. To find the expected results, Eduledger reached the peak point by the longest average time 299.86ms as to 50KB where Educhain took 263.21ms and DVF took 257.01ms. However, Educhain has performed more consistently; but DVF has fluctuated throughout the test due to crossing top and below of the threshold of Educhain's trendline at 40 KB and 50KB respectively.

The second performance test is the throughput of data transactions, which measures the average speed of each algorithm to process the data block stream to the respective block-chain database. This will observe the variability between each algorithm under different load capacities for the benchmark performance. According to the demonstration of this test, it is started from 10KB with 1000.22kbps for Eduledger, 973.71kbps for Educhain and 1102.43kbps for DVF. DVF's algorithm yielded the highest throughput at the minimum load point. Due to the data load increases, the throughput of Eduledger and DVF rose steadily but Educhain has shown a sharp increase from 1145.35kbps at 20KB to 1711.09kbps at 40KB overtaking both Eduledger and DVF. All algorithms leveled off and peaked between 40 and 50KB where Educhain produces the highest throughput 1807.11kbps as the best scalable performance and DVF shows the lowest result.

The third performance test is to determine the latency per data size where it measures the average delay of each algorithm to send and receive a variable data block to their respective block-chain server. This will allow for observation of the latency difference among algorithms under different load capacities as benchmark performance. According to the presentation of this work, it started from 10KB with 0.01505ms for Eduledger, 0.01532ms for Educhain and 0.01412ms for DVF. At the minimum load point, DVF's yielded the best shortest duration of latency. Between 10 to 30KB, the duration of latency of all algorithms rose in tandem with their respective position, DVF at the lowest rate of increase to 0.02547ms, seconded to Eduledger at 0.02566ms followed by 0.02575ms. All algorithms followed the same trendline until they intersected at 30KB. At 30KB the respective latency of each algorithm is 0.02566ms (Eduledger). 0.02575ms (Educhain), 0.02547ms (DVF). If increase in latency, Educhain ended the experiment with the latency of 0.03272ms as lowest rate followed by Eduledger at 0.03429 and DVF at 0.03462ms. It can be observed that DVF yields the best result in terms of latency at loads below 30KB however Educhain has the overall commandment of latency above 50KB. A low latency algorithm is preferred to prevent time and data loss. Therefore, these show favorable scalability behavior for the Educhain.

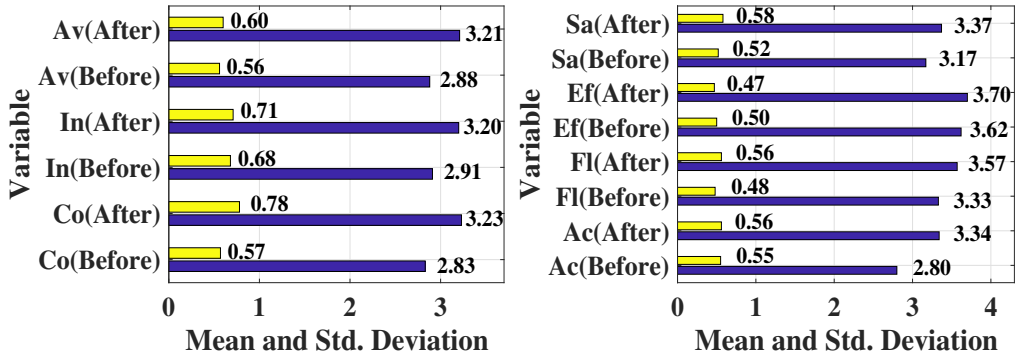
The last performance test is to measure the throughput of multiple clients to block-chain server for the scalable integrated Educhain format in comparison to the non-scalable integrated Eduledger format. It measures the average throughput of client from each algorithm to send a data block to their respective block-chain server. We are interested in observing the differences in throughput per client between each algorithm under a single load capacity fixed at 50KB.

For these test observations, at 1 client Eduledger started from 1710.03kbps and Educhain started from 1807.11kbps. Educhain has slowly reached its peak for 3 clients up to 1990.71kbps but, it decreases mildly until 1923.83 with 4 clients before falling sharply to 1451.36kbps with 5 clients. Eduledger has shown a continuous uptrend from 1 client to 2 clients. Next, the trend reverses to a steady downtrend until it reaches 1426.93kbps at 4 clients and it resumes with a sharp decline to 1100.96kbps at 5 clients. Clearly, Educhain has shown the scalable and improved results with higher overall throughput at every level as compared to Eduledger.

B. Feasibility Analysis

The system exploration consists of 21 items based on seven criteria: confidentiality, integrity, availability, accountability, flexibility, effectiveness and satisfaction where each criterion contains three items are adapted with some modification from [27], which utilizes the Likerttype scale of 4 scales starting from 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree, measuring the perception or opinion of a different factor in academic data handling; are represented in Fig. 5 (a) & (b). There are two sessions where the first session will be a 15 minute briefing about the existing academic data handling system and the second session will be another 15 minute briefing about block-chain based academic data handling system.

1) User Perception towards Confidentiality, Integrity and Availability: For the confidentiality in academic data handling, the acceptability of existing method provides m= 2.83, SD= 0.57 whereas, the user perception after implementation achieves m= 3.23, SD= 0.78. Most users have affirmed that the proposed method can ensure better integrity with m = 3.20, SD = 0.71 compared to conventional practice with m = 2.91, SD= 0.68 for user perception in academic data handling. It is incontestable that users believed that the proposed method could ensure data availability as the revealed findings as m = 3.21, SD= 0.60 compared to their perception on the recent method as m = 2.88, SD = 0.56. The confidentiality, higher integrity and availability of their data will be increased with the implementation of the proposed method due to exhibit a desirable attitude of users.



(a) (b)

Fig. 5: Analysis on user evaluations for (a) Confidentiality (Co), Integrity (In) and Availability (Av); (b) Accountability (Ac), Flexibility (Fl), Effectiveness (Ef) and Satisfaction (Sa).

2) User Perception towards Accountability, Flexibility, Effectiveness and Satisfaction: On the accountability of academic data handling, from the observation, most users affirmed that the proposed method is a better way (m = 3.34, SD = 0.56) compared to the current method (m = 2.80, SD= 0.55). For the user perceptions on academic data handling, the majority of users agreed that the flexibility of proposed method (m =3.57, SD =0.56) is much better compared to the current method (m =3.33, SD =0.48) if implemented. Users believed the proposed method of academic data handling is more effective compared to the current method (m =3.62, SD =0.47). Thus, they consented more to this method (m =3.70, SD =0.50) from their perception. Analysis of user satisfaction opinions in academic data handling provides (m = 3.37, SD = 0.58) on proposed method compared to current method as (m = 3.17, SD =0.52). Most users expect a reliable and effective academic data handling system like this for better outcomes and satisfaction to avoid risky activities for the long term.

3) T-test result: It has been tested to exhibit whether there is any significant difference between the conventional method and exploiting block-chain based proposed method in academic data handling to validate the hypothesis of the work. The T-test results are shown in TABLE II for p-value $p < 0.05$ which are evaluated to compare the mean values of two groups and observed the significant differences

for proposed system compared to the existing systems.User perception towards several features of this system is measured to utilize the Likert-type scale of four scales ranging from 1 (strongly

TABLE II: T-test result

Criteria	Method	Mean	SD	Sig(p)
Confidentiality	Before	2.83	0.57	0.0046
	After	3.23	0.78	
Integrity	Before	2.91	0.68	0.0248
	After	3.20	0.71	
Availability	Before	2.88	0.56	0.0158
	After	3.21	0.60	
Accountability	Before	2.80	0.55	0.0001
	After	3.34	0.56	
Flexibility	Before	3.33	0.48	0.0413
	After	3.57	0.56	
Effectiveness	Before	3.62	0.50	0.4654
	After	3.70	0.47	
Satisfaction	Before	3.17	0.52	0.0852
	After	3.37	0.58	

disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). We have obtained the mean values of the proposed method in term of confidentiality, integrity, availability, accountability, flexibility, effectiveness and satisfaction given by 3.23, 3.20, 3.21, 3.34, 3.57, 3.70, and 3.37 respectively which is better than conventional methods. We have noticed that the differences between both approaches are significance since $p < 0.05$ as governed by Cronbach alpha rule of thumb except the significance of two features (effectiveness and satisfaction) in which the $p > 0.05$.

V. Conclusion

Motivated by the need of digitalization in the education industry 4.0, we have studied a new framework of secured data handling by exploiting block-chain technology to guarantee CIA of highly-sensitive educational data delivered via a set of microservices. We have developed systematic mechanisms to aid in the development and implementation of the framework though specifications of functional units of the block-chain enabled platform. We have then demonstrated the desirable performance of the system using standard metrics such as time cost of publishing transactions, throughput and latency. To provide further validation, we have performed user acceptance testing around CIA features and needs. This later investigation has revealed the sig-

nificant need of incorporating block-chain technology for flexible, reliable and secured handling of sensitive academic data.

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